



Questions and Answers for Administrators about the Postponement of the CAHSEE Requirement

Why did the State Board of Education (SBE) decide to postpone the CAHSEE graduation requirement to the Class of 2006?

The SBE based its decision on the independent evaluation of the CAHSEE, conducted last spring as required by Assembly Bill 1609 (*California Education Code* Section 60857). The study focused on the test development of the CAHSEE and the implementation of standards-based instruction in California public schools.

Where did the independent evaluator, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), obtain information that was used in the AB 1609 study?

The independent evaluator surveyed principals and teachers in 298 California high schools and 173 middle-grade feeder schools for those high schools. The teacher surveys covered 3,270 high school courses and 2,006 middle-grade feeder school courses. In addition, 62 schools were visited, with principal and teacher interviews at each site. Information from the CAHSEE administrations also was used in assessing standards-based instruction.

What did the AB 1609 study determine about the test development process for the CAHSEE?

After an extensive review of the relevant standards published in *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, the most widely accepted standards for testing, the study concluded that development of the CAHSEE meets all required professional testing standards for use as a graduation test.

What did the AB 1609 study show about the implementation of standards-based instruction?

- CAHSEE has led to (1) dramatically increased coverage of the California Content Standards at the middle and high school levels; and (2) development of new courses to provide help for students who have difficulty mastering these standards.

- Initial instruction and remedial courses have had limited effectiveness in helping some students master the required standards.
- Many students placed in supplemental and remedial standards-based courses would benefit from instruction in the prerequisite skills needed for these courses.
- Many factors suggest that the effectiveness of standards-based instruction will improve for each succeeding class after the Class of 2004.

Does the law allow the SBE the option to postpone the CAHSEE requirement again?

No. State law (*California Education Code* Section 60857) provided one opportunity for the SBE to postpone the CAHSEE requirement. The law also required that the decision be based on results of an independent evaluation of the test development process and the implementation of standards-based instruction in California public schools.

Will students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 who worked hard to pass the CAHSEE be acknowledged?

Students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 who passed both parts of the CAHSEE, English-language arts and mathematics, may be awarded a state Certificate of Accomplishment. This certificate will signify that students passing this examination have demonstrated competency in reading, writing, and mathematics, according to state academic content standards.



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What happens to students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 who have not yet passed one or both parts of the test?

All students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 are to be commended for participating in the CAHSEE. These students are no longer required to pass the CAHSEE as a state graduation requirement. The California Department of Education (CDE) will release a secure form of the CAHSEE for districts to assess students in these classes who want the opportunity to pass the exam and to receive the Certificate of Accomplishment. It will be available this fall to district CAHSEE coordinators through the secure ETS testing Web site at <http://cahsee.ets.org>. More details about the posting schedule and process for accessing the test form will be distributed to districts when plans are finalized.

Are school districts/schools still required to provide remediation to students who are not showing progress in learning the academic standards covered by the CAHSEE?

Schools are required by state law to provide remediation to students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. In addition to the CAHSEE, other standards-based indicators that can be used to determine a student's level of academic achievement include results of the California Standards Tests, district and/or school assessments, course grades, and teacher evaluations.

Does the postponement of the CAHSEE to 2006 change other requirements for graduation?

No. All students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 must meet current state and/or district requirements to receive a high school diploma, with the exception of the CAHSEE. Students planning to enter a college or university following high school must meet additional requirements.

When will the CAHSEE be given again?

The next testing dates are scheduled for February/March 2004 only for tenth graders in the Class of 2006.

What happens if tenth graders (Class of 2006) do not pass the CAHSEE in spring 2004?

Tenth graders in the Class of 2006 who do not pass one or both parts of the CAHSEE in spring 2004 will have up to five opportunities to retake the exam. This will include one final time after grade 12 when all other graduation requirements have been met. Students retake only the part(s) of the exam not previously passed. School districts are required by state law to provide additional instruction to assist students who do not pass the exam.

How will the CAHSEE postponement affect the current momentum toward fully implementing standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments in California's secondary schools?

Current efforts to fully implement standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments in all secondary schools within the state should continue at the same pace. Next year's tenth graders should be prepared to take the CAHSEE in spring 2004, and results of this and future administrations will count toward the 2006 graduation requirement.

Can districts continue to give the CAHSEE to students in the Class of 2004/2005 as a local proficiency requirement?

No. Districts may not use the CAHSEE as a local graduation requirement for students in the Class of 2004 or 2005.

Will the change in the CAHSEE requirement to the Class of 2006 affect the Academic Performance Index (API) calculations?

The change in the CAHSEE requirement will not affect the 2003 Growth API but will affect 2003 API Base. Details will be released by CDE's Policy and Evaluation Division when available.



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Will the CAHSEE still be used as the high school test of core knowledge for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) purposes?

Yes. The test will be offered as a census administration for tenth graders for both the CAHSEE and for the NCLB high school test of core knowledge in February and March 2004 with a make-up opportunity in either March or May 2004.

What CAHSEE resources are available for assisting local administrators with parent communications and/or teacher training?

Currently, released test questions from previous CAHSEE administrations and CAHSEE teacher guides for English-language arts and mathematics are available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/> on CDE's CAHSEE Web site. New CAHSEE parent/student study guides for both subjects tested will be posted at the same Internet address as soon as they are completed this summer. Copies for distribution to students will be sent to districts when they are printed.

What do the CAHSEE parent/student study guides provide?

Both guides include a sample of released test questions with solutions from the 2001 and 2002 administrations. In addition, the guides provide answers to frequently asked questions, test taking tips, and practice tests.

What strands do the CAHSEE Mathematics Study Guide cover?

The CAHSEE Mathematics Study Guide covers the following strands of the state standards for grades 6 and 7 and for Algebra I:

- Number Sense
- Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability
- Measurement and Geometry
- Algebra and Functions
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Algebra I

What strands do the CAHSEE English-Language Arts Study Guide cover?

The CAHSEE English-Language Arts Study Guide covers the following strands of the state standards for grades 9/10:

- Word Analysis
- Reading Comprehension
- Literary Response and Analysis
- Writing Strategies
- Writing Conventions
- Writing Applications

When can districts/schools expect to receive additional assistance from the CDE?

CAHSEE workshops for teachers and curriculum leaders have been set for October. These workshops will focus on CAHSEE teacher guides, newly released test questions, and training for scoring constructed-response items. Test administration workshops for district CAHSEE coordinators are planned for December.

Additional information about the CAHSEE is posted on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/>.